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Breaking the tire code

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration of Transportation Dept. has assigned code letters to processors of retreaded tires and revised the list of code letters assigned to new-tire manufacturers. New tires are marked with a symbol "DOT" and a 2-letter code. Retreaded tires are marked with an "R" and a 3-letter code.

The agency adopted the code systems last May to facilitate tire recalls. The codes designate manufacturer or retreader and address. They do not contain any safety or performance information. By breaking the tire codes, a customer may satisfy his curiosity about which company really makes the tires sold by a national chain store, a franchised outlet or a local service station. Many manufacturers make tires that are sold under another brandname or under a store name or another company's name.

The Jan. 11 issue of *Federal Register* contains the lists of companies and codes. The agency does not require manufacturers, retreaders or retailers to make the lists available to consumers. And because of the lengths of the lists, they are not easy to reproduce (they would fill 65 pages in CONSUMER NEWS). If you want a copy of the lists as published in the Jan. 11 *Federal Register*, send your request and 20¢ to Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Snowmobile regulations—not even a flurry

Each winter, Federal and state agencies receive more and more complaints about snowmobiles—trespassing on private land; crossing busy public roads; chasing wildlife; damaging terrain, trees & undergrowth; contributing to air pollution and making a lot of noise.

States with snowmobile activity have enacted, or are considering, laws to regulate snowmobiles and their use. The states' chief concerns are prohibiting snowmobiles from public roads and requiring effective mufflers.

There are no Federal regulations of snowmobiles, but Interior Dept. is studying the potential environmental, social and economic impact of snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles. Its study is expected to be the basis for legislation or departmental regulation of snowmobiles on public lands.

Until there is a Federal law or regulation about snowmobiles, the only Federal position on snowmobiles is "The Snowmobiler's Code" suggested by Interior Dept.'s National Park Service:

1. Use your influence with other snowmobile owners to promote sportsmanlike conduct.
2. Do not litter trails or camping areas. Do not pollute streams or lakes.
3. Do not damage living trees, shrubs, or other natural features.
4. Respect other people's property and rights.
5. Lend a helping hand when you see someone in distress.
6. Make yourself and your vehicle available to search-and-rescue parties.
7. Do not interfere with or harass skiers, snowshoers, ice fishermen or other winter sportsmen. Respect their rights to enjoy recreation facilities.
8. Know and obey all Federal, state and local snowmobile regulations.
9. Do not harass wildlife. Stay out of areas posted for the protection and feeding of wildlife.

FDA lists more banned toys

Food & Drug Administration's Bureau of Products Safety announced last month that it banned about 75 toys in December and early January. The bureau said distribution of toys on the list has been discontinued. The bureau added: "In many cases they (toys) have been redesigned to eliminate the hazard and redistributed, or dropped from the line."

The list comprises the generic or brand name of each toy as identified by Bureau of Product Safety, date of ban in parenthesis, reason for ban and manufacturer or distributor:

Butterfly pull toy #39 (about 12-15-71) sharp edges and small objects exposed.

Kusan Inc.

Nashville, Tenn.

Squirrel squeeze toy #164, globe totter squeeze toy #125, squeeze giraffes #197, squeeze toy animals #199, baseball glove with ball, squeeze toy #166RS (12-28-71), #164, 125, 197, & 199: squeaker removes; #116RS: sharp edges and small objects exposed.

Bomar Co., Division of Kiddie Products Co.

Squantum, Mass.

Jet party favors, whistling blow-outs, #502/518/515 (about 1-12-72) sharp wire.

Jet Industries Inc.

Stamford, Conn.

Santa squeeze toy #3-440, cat squeaker toy #3-17, rattle #3/196—2-bells shape & 2-balls shape, rattle #3/101—4-balls shape & 2-bells shape (1-12-72) #3-440 & 3-17: squeaker removes; #3/195, 3/196 & 3/101: sharp edges & small objects.

Star Manufacturing Co.

Leominster, Mass.

Toy harmonica (about 1-12-72) sharp edges of metal.

Larami Corp. (importer)

Philadelphia, Pa.

Tak-A-Toy (distributor)

Hyattsville, Md.

Clothes-pin rattle #658P; flowerpot hat face rattle #672P, sailor-duck rattle #655P, rocking-horse rattle #219P, safety-pin rattle #658P, clothes-pin rattle #264P (12-28-71) sharp edges & small objects exposed.

Plakie Toys Inc.

Youngstown, Ohio

"Lett's Play Roly Poly Rattle" (1-12-72) small objects exposed.

Sanger-Harris Co.

Dallas, Tex.

Unidentified toy rattle (about 1-12-72) sharp edges & small objects exposed.

New York Merchandise Co.

Dallas, Tex.

Small stuffed toy orange elephant (1-12-72) sharp wire in trunk.

Herman Pecker & Co.

New York, N.Y.

If you believe a toy is hazardous and should not be on the market, you may want to notify FDA's Toy Review Committee, describing the toy, its name (if any), model number (if any) and name and address of manufacturer or distributor. Also give the name and address of the store stocking the toy. Send your comments to Toy Review Committee, Bureau of Product Safety, Food & Drug Administration, 5401 Westbard Ave., Bethesda, Md. 20016.

Milk bottle & hammer set (about 1-12-72) small objects exposed.

S & M Co.

Minneapolis, Minn.

"Goggle-Eye" doll #651-34 & "Boy on Bike" #552-22 (about 1-12-72) #651-34: squeaker & eyes remove; #552-22: multiple sharp edges & blunt handle bars.

Dan Brechner & Co. Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Squeeze toys—dog, elephant, bear, sitting rabbit & rabbit eating carrot (1-7-72) squeaker removes.

Dreamland Creations Inc.

Bronx, N.Y.

Baby's musical nursery carousel #2601 (12-23-71) small objects & metal rod as puncture hazard.

Korvettes Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Stuffed kittens & dogs #140 (about 1-12-72) eyes have sharp points.

M & S Toys Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Plastic doll #78 & musical rock-a-bye ball (about 1-12-72) #78: small objects; ball: multiple sharp edges & small object.

Mego Corp.

New York, N.Y.

Clatter balls #846, rattle #631—2-bells shape & 3-disc shape, rattle #632—2-bells shape & 4-balls shape (about 1-12-72) sharp edges & small objects exposed.

Nippy Mfg. Co.

Jamaica, N.Y.

Toy clown dolls #4035 (about 1-12-72) sharp wires in feet.

M. Pressner & Co. Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Pin-ball rattle toy #770 assorted, Jack N' Jill rattle #880, cradle exercisers #22 bells & 35B lambs, tinkle-flower rattle #990, #751 rattle—2-bells shape, #750 assorted & RK70—1-ball shape, Chickie play ball #926 (about 1-12-72) sharp edges & objects exposed.

Stahlwood Toy Mfg. Co. Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Tiny Toddles doll #9120/8 (about 1-12-72) straight pin.

Uneeda Doll Co. Inc.

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Baby rattles #M11-118, baby rattles #JX-814, whistles #241, whistles #T7/408, fox squeeze toy #P-10, cat squeeze toy #F-22,

lamb squeeze toy #F-44 & puppy squeeze toy #F-12 (about 1-12-72) #M11/118, JX-714 & 77-408: small objects exposed; #241: sharp edges & small objects exposed; #P-10, F-22, F-44, & F-12: squeaker removes.

Cut-Rate Linoleum Store
New Orleans, La.

Toy stuffed dog #6/75N, unlabeled baby rattles, baby rattles #70-134 & whistles #39/47 (about 1-12-72) #6/75N: sharp wires in ears; #70-134 & unlabeled baby rattles: sharp edges & small objects exposed; #39/47: small objects exposed.

Oriental Trading Co.
Metairie, La.

Tidy nursery toys teether rattle (about 1-12-72) sharp edges & small objects exposed.

Tidy Ties Corp.
Metairie, La.

Stuffed mouse "Dream Pets" #1253 (12-15-71) sharp wires in ears.

R. Dakin & Co.
San Francisco, Calif.

Squeeze toys #835 reconditioned, squeeze toys #838 reconditioned, Little-Champ boxing gloves, #710, Shake-Me toy rattles #819, #755—1-ball shape, #756—2-ball shape, 2-ball shape & bracelet-ring shape, #575—2-ball shape, 4-balls shape & 4-balls dumbbell shape, Action-Baby ponies exerciser #860 (1-12-72) #835, 838 & 710: squeaker removes; #819, 755, 756, 757 & 860: sharp edges & pieces exposed.

Reliance Product Corp.
Woonsocket, R.I.

Merry-go-round musical ball (about 1-12-72) sharp edges & small objects exposed.

S. S. Kresge Co.
Detroit, Mich.

Musical merry-go-round (about 1-12-72) small objects & metal rod presents puncture hazard.

Leda Associates Inc.
New York, N.Y.

Speak up & be heard

• Frozen dinners

Feb. 21 is deadline for filing comments on Food & Drug Administration's proposal to establish nutrition guidelines for precooked frozen convenience heat-and-serve dinners. FDA's proposal is based on recommendations of National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Food Standards & Fortification Policy. FDA would ask manufacturers to follow the guidelines voluntarily, but it would not require compliance. The proposal would

- request minimum levels of protein, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, iron & iodine;
- request frozen dinners to contain (1) meat, poultry, fish or cheese protein; (2) a vegetable other than potatoes, rice or other cereal-based product; (3) potatoes, rice or other cereal-based product; dinners may contain other components.
- request frozen dinners to contain a minimum of 340 calories and to state on the label the actual number of calories.

FDA wants specific comments from consumers on two alternative labeling procedures included in the proposal. Under the first procedure, a manufacturer complying with the guidelines may use—but not be required to use—the following statement on the label: "The nutrient content of this product meets the Federal Nutritional Quality Guidelines for frozen convenience 'heat-and-serve' dinners." Under the alternate procedure, the complying products would not have to mention the guidelines, but noncomplying products would be required to include the statement: "The nutrient content of this product varies from the Federal Nutritional Quality Guidelines frozen convenience 'heat-and-serve' dinners in that it _____," the blank being filled in with a description of the manner in which the food does not comply.

(For details, see *Federal Register*: Dec. 23, 1971, page 24822. You may also want a copy of the National Academy of Sciences report, *Nutritional Guidelines Recommendations—Frozen Convenience Dinners*, which is available from Office of Education & Consumer Affairs, Food & Drug Administration, Room 12-56, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.)

Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

• Sizing of girls' apparel

Feb. 25 is deadline for filing comments on National Bureau of Standards' recommended voluntary product standard titled "Body Measurements for the Sizing of Girls' Apparel." NBS is revising the standard at the request of the Mail Order Association of America. The standard is to establish a voluntary nationally recognized sizing system for girls based on body measurements. The standard covers 3 classifications: slims, regulars & chubbies. In each classification, sizes 7, 8, 10, 12, 14 & 16 are defined by 33 body measurements. (For details, see *Voluntary Product Standard TS 117*, which is available free from Office of Engineering Standards Services, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. 20234.)

Send comments to Office of Engineering Standards Services, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. 20234.

• New tire safety information

March 31 is deadline for filing comments on Transportation Dept.'s proposal to amend standards for new auto tires to require safety labeling information to be placed on both sidewalls away from the tread so the data may be retained if a tire is retread. Labels must report the size of tire, maximum inflation, maximum load rating, generic name of each cord material used in the plies; number of plies in sidewall and tread; "tubeless" or "tube type"; "radial" if tire is radial ply. (For details, see *Federal Register*: Dec. 23, 1971, page 24824.)

Send comments to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5221, 400 7th St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Identify comments with the following number: Docket No. 71-28.

Is free merchandise really free? FTC says yes

Do you really get one item free when you buy another one at a "2-for-1 sale"? That depends. If the retailer is abiding by a new Federal Trade Commission guide, he is selling you one item and giving you the other. If he is covering the cost of the "free" item with a higher price for the other, he may be using an unfair and deceptive sales practice, which is a violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

FTC's guide applies to offers of "free" merchandise or services, "buy 1 & get 1 free," "2-for-1 sale," "50% off with purchase of 2" and "1-cent sale."

The guide says consumers understand that—except for introductory offers—a "free" offer is based upon a regular price for the article or service that must be purchased to receive the "free" one. "Free" indicates that the consumers pay nothing for that article and no more than the regular price for the other. Thus, consumers have a right to believe that the merchant will not directly and immediately recover all or part of the cost of the "free" merchandise or service by marking up the price of the item that must be purchased or by substituting inferior merchandise or service or by other means. "Regular price" means the price that the seller or advertiser has charged for the same quantity and quality and for the same service in the local area during the last 30 days. The guide also provides that:

- All terms, conditions and obligations of the "free" offer should be set forth clearly and conspicuously at the outset so that there will be no misunderstanding about the offer;
- A single size of a product or a single kind of service should not be advertised with a "free" offer for more than 6 months in any 12-month period within a trade area;
- In the case of introductory offers, no "free" offer should be made and no representation may be made that the price is for one item and that the offer is "free" unless the seller, in good faith, expects to discontinue the offer after a limited time and to commence selling the product or service promoted, separately, at the same price at which it was promoted with the "free" offer;
- Offers of free merchandise or services that may be deceptive for failure to meet the guide's provisions may not be corrected by substituting other similar words or terms that tend to convey the impression to consumers that an article or service is free.

If you want more information about FTC's guide and a copy of the guide, you should write to Division of Rules & Guides, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C. 20580.

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